

August 18, 2015

I am pleased to join in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Ryan White CARE (Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency) Act.

Since the first cases of AIDS were reported, tens of millions of men and women around the world have lost their lives to it, and too many have had to fight to receive adequate care and to be treated with dignity and respect. Many Americans would not be alive if not for the bravery of those committed to advancing medical progress and establishing more compassionate care.

Today, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program touches over half of all people with HIV in the United States. Taking a public health-oriented approach, this program helps people get the care they need while providing essential support services to patients facing financial barriers to treatment. By working with cities, States, and local community-based organizations to prevent and treat HIV, the Ryan White Program has helped prevent HIV transmission and broaden access to affordable, lifesaving treatment for people who need it—regardless of who they are or where they come from.

In 2010, we released the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy. Since then, we have made extraordinary progress in our efforts to prevent and treat HIV, thanks in large part to the Affordable Care Act, scientific advances, and the Ryan White Program. Yet, over a million Americans are still living with HIV, and approximately 50,000 more are infected each year. Gay and bisexual men, African Americans, Latinos and Latinas, transgender women, and people who inject drugs continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV, and far too many people who are infected are not receiving medical care.

To keep building on the progress we have made, we have recommitted to the work laid out in our National HIV/AIDS Strategy by updating it last month with plans to guide our work through 2020. By providing critical comprehensive care to so many Americans living with HIV, the Ryan White Program continues to be a cornerstone of our strategy to address HIV across America. It is part of our collective effort to ensure that every American has unfettered access to high-quality care—free from stigma and discrimination—and it helps us inch closer to a day when nobody has to know the pain caused by this devastating disease.

I am grateful to everyone who has fought to transform what it means to live with HIV. As we celebrate the impact this program has made on countless lives, let us rededicate ourselves to supporting those touched by HIV, their families, and the medical and social service professionals working to defeat it.